

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

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1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising:
a ~~biocompatible~~ cylindrical introducer member with an outer wall and a hollow core, the cylindrical member having a longitudinal axis and an opening along a side; and
~~biocompatible means~~ a cutting edge that permits acoustic vibration substantially independently from the introducer, the cutting edge positioned in the introducer member for cutting tissue entering the opening as the ~~means for cutting~~ cutting edge travels with respect to the opening without rotating and without using electric current for performing the cutting.
2. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1 further including means for coagulating blood in cut tissue so that the coagulation operation occurs immediately after or simultaneously with cutting the tissue.
3. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the ~~means for cutting~~ edge is a wire made from ceramic, silicon, or metal.
- 3 4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 3 further including means for applying ultrasonic energy to the ~~means for cutting~~ cutting edge to facilitate cutting.
5. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1 further wherein the ~~means for~~ cutting edge further operates to coagulate blood in cut tissue.

Claims 6-8 (Canceled).

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9. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

positioning in a body a ~~biocompatible~~ cylindrical introducer member with an outer wall and a hollow core, the cylindrical member having a longitudinal axis and an opening along a side; and

using a cutting member ~~positioned in the introducer~~ the cutting member that permits acoustic vibration substantially independently from the introducer and cutting tissue entering the opening by moving the cutting member with respect to the opening without rotating the cutting member and without using electric current for performing the cutting.

10. (Previously Amended) A method according to claim 9 further including means for coagulating blood in cut tissue so that a coagulation operation occurs immediately after or simultaneously with cutting the tissue.

3 11. (Previously Amended) A method according to claim 9 wherein a wire is used as a cutting member.

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Cand 12. (Previously Amended) A method according to claim 11 further including applying ultrasonic energy to the wire to facilitate cutting.

13. (Previously Amended) A method according to claim 9 wherein the cutting member is also used to coagulate blood in cut tissue.

Claims 14-16 (Canceled).

17. (Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising:

a ~~biocompatible~~ cylindrical introducer member with an outer wall and a hollow core, the ~~cylindrical~~ introducer member having a longitudinal axis and an opening along a side;

a ~~biocompatible~~ cylindrical inner member with an outer wall and a hollow core, the ~~cylindrical~~ inner member having a longitudinal axis and an opening along a side and sized to fit inside the introducer member; and

7 means for cutting tissue, the means for cutting permitting acoustic vibrations substantially
8 independently from the introducer, the means for cutting entering the opening in the inner
member as the means for cutting travels with respect to the opening in the inner member.

18. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 17 further including means for coagulating
blood in cut tissue so that the coagulation operation occurs immediately after or simultaneously
with cutting the tissue.

2: 19. (Previously Amended) Apparatus according to claim 17 wherein the means for cutting is
a wire formed from ceramic, silicon, or metal.

3 20. (Previously Amended) Apparatus according to claim 19 further including means for
applying ultrasonic energy to the means for cutting to facilitate cutting.

B 1 21. (Previously Amended) Apparatus according to claim 17 wherein the means for cutting
further operates to coagulate blood in cut tissue.

Cont 22. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 20 wherein the ultrasonic energy assists in
coagulating blood.

23. ~~(Withdrawn) Apparatus comprising:~~
~~a biocompatible cylindrical introducer member with an outer wall and a hollow core, the~~
~~cylindrical member having a longitudinal axis and an opening along a side; and~~
~~a rod with a U-shaped end that supports a cutting wire positioned in the introducer~~
~~member for cutting tissue entering the opening as the cutting wire travels with respect to the~~
~~opening.~~

24. (Withdrawn) Apparatus of claim 23 wherein the U-shaped end bends away from the
longitudinal axis.

25. (Withdrawn) Apparatus of claim 24 wherein the rod comprises a non-conductive material.

26. (Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising:

a biocompatible cylindrical introducer member with an outer wall and a hollow core, the cylindrical member having a longitudinal axis and an opening along a side; and

a hollow tube slidable in the hollow core with a hollow tube opening about the size of the opening and a cutting wire positioned on one end of the hollow tube opening.

27. (Previously Added) Apparatus of claim 26 wherein the wire comprises a ceramic.

28. (Previously Added) Apparatus of claim 26 wherein the wire is to be energized at a first frequency to cut tissue during a first traverse of the opening and at a second frequency to coagulate the cut tissue during a second traverse of the opening.

29. (Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising:

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a biocompatible cylindrical introducer member with an outer wall and a hollow core, the cylindrical member having a longitudinal axis and an opening along a side; and

a hollow tube slidable in the hollow core with a hollow tube opening about the size of the opening and a cutting wire positioned at an end of the hollow tube and forming an edge of the hollow tube opening.

30. (Previously Added) Apparatus of claim 29 wherein the hollow tube comprises titanium.

31. (Previously Added) Apparatus of claim 29 wherein the cutting wire is to be energized at a first frequency to cut tissue during a first traverse of the opening and at a second frequency to coagulate the tissue during a second traverse of the opening.

32. (Withdrawn) Apparatus comprising:

a biocompatible cylindrical introducer member with an outer wall and a hollow core, the cylindrical member having a longitudinal axis and an opening along a side; and

a hollow tube slidable in the hollow core including a cutting surface formed from or supported along an edge of a wall of the hollow tube such that rotating the hollow tube in the introducer member causes the cutting surface to move in a direction that is both in part parallel to the longitudinal axis and transverse to the longitudinal axis.

33. (Withdrawn) Apparatus according to claim 32 further including means for coagulating blood that is positioned adjacent to and behind the cutting surface.

34. (New) The apparatus of claim 26, further comprising an ultrasound energy source coupled to the cutting wire.

35. (New) The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising an ultrasound energy source coupled to the cutting wire.
